DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 153 413 EC 110 362

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TITLE CAMPHILL: A Brief Introduction.
PUB DATE May 78
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual International Convention, The Council for Exceptional Children (56th, Kansas City, Missouri, May 2-5, 1978, Session W32)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adults; *Community; *Group Experience; *Mentally Handicapped; *Residential Centers
IDENTIFIERS Camphill Village; Steiner (Rudolph)

ABSTRACT

Described are two Camphill villages which provide community oriented residential life for retarded adults based on the philosophy of R. Steiner. Both villages emphasize community life and "family" units, curative education, meaningful work (crafts and farming), volunteer co-workers, and financial contribution based on ability to pay. Briefly described is a children's village (Camphill Special Schools) based on the Waldorf School curriculum. (DB)

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CAMPHILL

A Brief Introduction

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CAMPHILL COMMUNITY

The Camphill Community was founded in 1940 by Karl Koenig, M. D. (1902-1966), taking as its task the care of mentally handicapped children. Later the work expanded to include mentally handicapped adults. Its name derives from its first home, Camphill House, near Aberdeen, Scotland. The Community has grown world-wide to include several thousand people, nearly 40 communities of different kinds, having in common the care for and sharing of life with mentally handicapped children or adults as well as a responsibility for many acres of land in Europe, South Africa and the U.S.A., as well as other tasks.

The Camphill Community is based on the insights of Rudolf Steiner and works for an ever fuller understanding of Man's spiritual being, eternal purpose and earthly task. People of all races and creeds are welcome to join in this process which leads to a Christianity beyond sectarianism. From this source arose the resolve to live together in such a way that people whose handicap might exclude them from other lifestyles may, if they choose, find a meaningful place in the Camphill Community. Work with the handicapped, care for the land, the administration of money and material resources - are tasks of equal and coherent significance.

From 1960 to 1972 the Camphill Community in the U.S. consisted of a residential school (Camphill Special Schools, Inc., Beaver Run, R.D. #1, Glenmoore, Pa. 19343) and Camphill Village U.S.A., Inc., at Copake, New York, 12516, a community with retarded adults. These communities still thrive.

THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY, COPAKE

Camphill Village in Copake is situated in a rural area of New York State, 110 miles north of New York City, on 580 acres of wooded hills and farmland. It comprises a group of family-sized custom-built houses, scenically placed within easy reach of a connecting circular private road. Each of them forms a self-contained household, shared by six to eight handicapped adults (referred to as the "Villagers") and two to four co-workers with their families.

A spacious hall ("Fountain Hall") is the center of the community's cultural events and artistic activities, religious services, meetings and entertainments. Various utility structures and farm buildings complete the physical setup which is surrounded by fields, vegetable gardens, pastures and forest.

Scattered throughout the Village are well equipped workshops for enameled copperware, woodwork (furniture for Village use and toys); woven goods and batik, whose creations are often used as cover material in the Village bookbindery; stuffed dolls and other soft toys; spinning, candle making, baked goods and in season, maple syrup. The workshop products are of a high technical standard. No work performed in the Village is in the nature of a mere occupational exercise. Knowledge that one's work is needed and actually depended on by others is one of the important social and therapeutic factors in the life of this community. It is always productive in one way or another. Dairy, farm and garden contribute a considerable part of the food requirements. Those engaged in forestry and the care of the grounds help maintain the neatness and ecological soundness of the outer surroundings. The craft products are enjoyed by countless people inside and outside the community. The work around house and kitchen assures the stability of daily life.

THE "VILLAGERS"

The handicapped persons who live in Camphill Village, Copake, are young or middle aged adults, eighteen years being the minimum age for admission. While their formal academic education might be considered completed by the time they come to the Village, they find many opportunities for further learning and the acquisition of skills and assume responsibilities within the community. Very often a significant process of maturing can be observed, for "awareness of interdependence foster independence".

Villagers are encouraged to involve themselves in community concerns wherever possible and take part in some of the many working meetings which are held every week. Co-workers and Villagers live and work together on equal terms. Humanly their mutual relations are much like those between members of a family.

An element of great educational value in the life of the community is the cultivation of a close connection of man to the land and the extensive celebration of festivals based on both Nature's seasonal rhythms and the traditional religious holidays.

There is no limit set for the duration of the Villagers' stay. Essentially, Camphill can become their permanent home. Since being part of the community is, and must remain, a voluntary decision, nobody is forced to stay on if he or she seriously wants to leave.

Lively interaction between Camphill Village and the wider local community (trade, exchange of visits; availability of civic services and the medical facilities of the area; voluntary neighborly assistance of many kinds and invitations to artistic events at Fountain Hall) - effectively aids integration, understanding and friendship.

ADMINISTRATION

Camphill Village is governed by a Board of Directors which addresses itself to questions of policy, long-range planning and decisions of a financial and legal nature. Within the Village itself, co-workers meet weekly in many specialized decision making groups to deal with the continuous flow of immediate concerns such as health care, work distribution, human needs, public relations, projects and purchases, cultural events and administrative matters. In the preparation of budgets and other affairs requiring detailed knowledge of local circumstances, the Village administrators are effectively aided by a Local Management Committee, composed of interested neighbors.

Most Villagers are entitled to receive Supplementary Security Income (SSI). This, together with contributions by the families or others and some donations, constitute the revenues of Camphill Village which form the basis of the operating budget. For capital funds to finance building and expansion the Village depends on private donors and foundations.

No salaries are received by the co-workers who render their service as full-time volunteers and members of a community enterprise. Sharing life around the clock with the handicapped members of the Village calls upon the application of human resources which elude evaluation in terms of dollars and cents. The income of the community, instead of being mechanically apportioned, is shared according to individual needs and every member of the Village freely contributes his share of work to the full extent of his ability.

VILLAGE COMMUNITY, KIMBERTON HILLS

In 1972 Camphill Village U.S.A., Inc. received as a gift the 350 acre property of Kimberton Hills. Its previous owners had begun to develop the land according to the indications of Rudolf Steiner - the curative attitude of Bio-dynamic agriculture. This strong intention, so much in harmony with Camphill philosophy, pervades the fertile farmland and woods, bounded by the French Creek in the north and west and by the Pughtown Road on the south.

The farm with its history gives a particular configuration to the life of this Camphill Village which has been devoted to the land from the outset. The people living here are working to build a harmonious relationship between the soil, the crops in the field and garden, the dairy and beef herds, the pigs and poultry, the bees, the woods and wildlife: this is the landscape of Kimberton Hills.

In the fall of 1977, the population was around 100 and intends to increase to a maximum of 140 over the next years. (About half the adult population is mentally retarded.)

As in all Camphill Villages the life is based on family-type households in which "normal" families and their children live together with those who are retarded, giving scope to each individual's right to be different, but avoiding all unnecessary labels and distinctions. There are at present eleven houses occupied by the community. The houses range in size from a large mansion to a small cottage in which four people live. Each house is quite individual according to its residents at any given time.

From the family group each person goes out daily to farm or garden, to another house for domestic duties, to maintenance of land or buildings. These tasks are carried by small groups under guidance; the emphasis is on teamwork rather than individual excellence, on the responsible performance of needed work rather than on competitive attainment. By integration into such a group individuals learn many skills and often unfold most unexpected potentials. It is important that all activities be seen in relation to the whole and in interdependence with the work and needs of others.

Development in the arts, including the art of living, leads to a strong cultural life, to new forms in architecture, a new appreciation of landscape. The celebration of festivals forms a major part of the life - both as a necessary rhythm in the work with the land and as part of the balanced growth of the human soul and spirit. Not only the four great seasonal festivals are emphasized, but several others, and indeed an element of festival pervades the rhythms of day and week. Studies, folk dancing, films, music, drama, games, crafts and the arts constitute a broad sweep of recreation and adult education through the year. In this and in all parts of the life, there is much exchange with the surrounding neighborhood.

In 1978 a community center will be built incorporating a tower-studio building which was donated to Kimberton Hills in 1975. The new building will house the growing intercultural life within the village as well as its growing interaction with neighbors. It is seen as a necessary project because of the growth of the village and as a challenge to integrate architectural and social demands of an agricultural life style.

* * *

Kimberton Hills is not for everyone. Its particular life-style is, however, attractive to many people. An essential factor is the free choice of each adult person to join the community. The decision is not lightly reached; all newcomers are encouraged to visit for at least one month, after which the decision is a mutual one between individual and community. Practical limitations are suggested by the terrain which precludes those who are non-ambulatory or those who lack awareness of their surroundings. It has been possible to

provide post-psychiatric rehabilitation for a few mentally retarded individuals. This possibility has been severely curtailed by recent legislation which hampers and inhibits the effectiveness of a potentially excellent local crisis intervention service. It is, however, generally the goal that Kimberton Hills be able to:

Provide a secure home and working place for mentally retarded adults who wish to join after a trial period;

Provide short term working vacations and respite care for mentally retarded adults living at home or in other settings;

Provide an intermediate step between institution and group-home or apartment living, for ex-residents of institutions who may need a secure, somewhat sheltered by non-institutional base from which to explore the competitive world;

Provide a home for some people who wish to work in the locality but have social limitations precluding their living alone.

Provide a focus for the immense goodwill of individuals and groups who wish to "serve the handicapped" in kind or by their work.

Provide experience in the biodynamic approach to agriculture as pursued in community together with mentally retarded adults.

FINANCES

The results of work on the land are expected to make a contribution both in cash and in kind to the economic life of the community. However, the community depends on private contributions for all capital expenses and some operating costs, especially for the unusually heavy demands of maintenance and repair.

Cash contributions are requested from those mentally retarded people to whom income is available from S.S.I. or other public or private sources. Each case is discussed individually; ability to pay is considered as a separate question from a newcomer's suitability and wish to join. Nevertheless, the possibility to include significant numbers of those who cannot contribute financially, depends on the availability of other funds.

The structure of full community living provides an efficient and attractive alternative to the competitive wage/salary system. Among other advantages it eliminates many of the barriers between people, allowing for the development of responsibility and mutual service within a community of varying types, skills, and needs.

CAMPHILL SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Setting and Facilities:

Camphill Special Schools - Beaver Run, Glenmoore, Pa. - is a children's village set into 60 acres of hills and woodland. Ten specially built

small family houses are placed into the landscape, together with a community center, a large schoolhouse and other facilities.

All members of Beaver Run, including the children, share in the work in several vegetable gardens, estate maintenance, horses, cattle, sheep and other creatures, great and small.

Beaver Run is approximately one hour driving time from Philadelphia.

STAFF

A group of experienced co-workers who have chosen Camphill as their way of life, serve as teachers, therapists and houseparents and form the backbone of Beaver Run. Most of these have been in the Camphill Movement for many years, but every year new co-workers come, many of them young people. Some stay only a few months; others never leave, but all are encouraged to participate fully in the life of Beaver Run.

SEMINAR

The international Seminar consists of a three-year training program conducted in all Camphill Special Schools, including Beaver Run.

The Seminarist, as dormitory parent and classhelper, learns by practical experience in living with handicapped children - an invaluable training in addition to his academic studies and courses.

The College of teachers conducts regular workshops for the future training of those who take up teaching after completing the basic three years of seminar.

A fourth year fulfills the demand for a thorough preparation toward the manifold tasks of a Camphill co-worker, related to the areas of education, social interaction, therapies and more. The four year course is recognized by the Pennsylvania State Board of Private Academic Schools, Department of Education, and successful students receive a Private Academic School Certificate, SPECIAL EDUCATION; MENTALLY RETARDED.

At the same time Camphill cooperates with the Waldorf Institute of Mercy College of Detroit, in a course leading to a B.A. in Special (Curative) Education (see appended brochure).

THE SCHOOL

All the children go to school. At present the youngest is seven and the oldest eithteen. From the first to the eighth grade they attend

classes morning and afternoon, generally following the Waldorf School curriculum as outlined by Rudolf Steiner, which places the child in a class according to his chronological age. They learn reading, writing and arithmetic and much more besides. Beginning with fairy tales, fables and myths, they progress through the history of civilization to the present day. In considering the wonders of nature, they learn to understand the place of man in the world. Arts, crafts, music and drama develop their creativity and means of self expression. Eurythmy, a new art of movement and gesture developed by Rudolf Steiner, fosters self-awareness, coordination and artistic sensitivity.

SENIORS PROGRAM

Pupils reaching fifteen years of age join the Senior Program. Emphasis changes to learning practical skills such as baking, pottery, weaving, household work, land maintenance, gardening, etc., although learning in the classroom continues.

Regular excursions, special cultural and social activities reflect the senior pupil's more adult status.

This program helps the student make the transition into adulthood by providing opportunities to experience the world and to gain confidence in the skills he will need when he leaves the school at eighteen.

CELEBRATION OF FESTIVALS

There are highlights in every day, every week, throughout the months and in every year. The art of life consists of learning how to afford the right kind of space for these moments. According to the occasion it is a space filled with peace, joy, music, drama, quiet contemplation and whatever else a creative mind can bring toward such celebrations.

Weekly religion lessons prepare the children for the non-denominational, Christian services held each Sunday. Every season is marked by a festival which is prepared by the teachers with their classes, groups of staff members giving a concert, or others producing plays that fit the occasion. Life in Camphill accompanies the cycle of the year in that kind of rhythm which enables children and adults to grow aware of the eternal values of existence.

THE CHILDREN - HOME LIFE

A child's life at Beaver Run is a full one. Its centre is the home where he lives as a member of a family of about fourteen people. Houseparents are usually a married couple, with their own children.

In the home, groups of two to four children live together in bright, pleasantly decorated rooms. Each such group is under the care of an adult dormitory parent, a younger co-worker, who oversees their personal hygiene and daily routines. Dormitory parent and children do any number of things together. They may clean, bake, play games or work outside. They may go for hikes on the nearby Horseshoe Trail or, on a Thursday when there is no school, they may go shopping or on an excursion to the Philadelphia Zoo or Longwood Botanical Gardens.

Each household is run as an independent unit and each has its unique atmosphere. Perhaps this is partly due to the variety of nationalities represented at Beaver Run, for many co-workers have come here from other Camphill centres elsewhere in the world. Thus our menus, decor and accents are different in every house.

The home is the child's centre and his strength. Between morning verse and bedtime story he goes out to school and play, but always, standing behind him is the home with all its warmth and caring.

THERAPEUTIC WORK

Over the years special therapies have been developed: music therapy, color light therapy and others. Many children have individual or group therapies discussed with and advised by the school's medical officer who visits weekly for regular clinics and case conferences.